

Good Friday 2017

*“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?
Father, forgive them, they know not what they do?”*

Two Different Prayers

We hear Jesus praying two different prayers on Good Friday. The first in the Garden was a prayer of suffering when Jesus said: *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”* as portrayed in Mel Gibson’s movie, *“The Passion of the Christ.”* The second prayer on the cross was a prayer of love when Jesus said, *“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do,”* as recognized by the great mystics. Jesus prayed both. He knew both suffering and love.

So why did Jesus die?

There have been a number of reasons put forth over the centuries as to why Jesus died. They can be grouped under two headings: Atonement, and Love. In the Atonement theory, Jesus is said to have died *“for us - in place of us”* to forgive sin. He was showing us what we were doing wrong. This theory begins with Original Sin. In the second, Jesus is said to have died *“for us - with us”* to show his love for us. He was showing us how to do things right. This theory begins with Original Blessing.

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My response

We see two different ways of responding to Jesus on the cross. The first is filled with sorrow and guilt. The second is filled with gratitude and love. We each need to ask ourselves, how do I find myself responding to Jesus on the cross?

As one who had to suffer for me, or as One who simply loves me?